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Addendum

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Programme questions

Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

Programme 20. Humanitarian assistance

1. At its 13th meeting, on 11 June 1998, the Committee considered the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001. It had before it the proposal in respect of programme 20, Humanitarian assistance.

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced programme 20, Humanitarian assistance, and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the programme.

Discussion

3. It was recalled that, in accordance with resolutions 52/12 B of 19 December 1997 and 52/220 of 22 December 1997, the operational demining activities as well as the Mine Clearance Unit were transferred to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and that the humanitarian mine-clearance activities should be conducted under the responsibility of the United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator. It was also noted that for the same reasons, the disaster management training programme was transferred to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

4. The view was expressed that the proposed continuation beyond the year 1999 under subprogramme 20.3, Natural disaster reduction, of activities related to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction was not justified, taking into account that the responsibility for natural disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness was transferred

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to UNDP under the terms of resolution 52/12 B and that the Decade itself was ending in 1999. Other views were expressed in support of the revised objectives of subprogramme 20.3. In that context it was stated that by its resolutions 51/185 of 16 December 1996 and 52/200 of 18 December 1997, the General Assembly had already emphasized the need for the continuation of a concerted and coordinated international effort to prevent, mitigate and rehabilitate damage caused by natural disasters.

Conclusions and recommendations

5. The Committee recommended approval of the proposed revisions to programme 20, Humanitarian affairs, of the medium-term plan, subject to the following modifications:

***Replace* paragraph 20.2 with the following:**

"20.2 The overall orientation of the programme is to ensure the timely, coherent and coordinated response of the international community to disasters and emergencies, including through effective use of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee; to promote natural disaster reduction in the context of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction; to facilitate the elaboration of policies to guide the work of the humanitarian community, including, *inter alia*, the linkages between emergency relief, rehabilitation and development; and to advocate guiding principles of humanitarian assistance."

***Add* subparagraph 20.4 (a) *bis* as follows:**

"(a) *bis*. To serve as a joint secretariat for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs, ensuring an effective exchange of information and a process of consultation between the two Committees;"

***Replace* subparagraph 20.4 (b) with the following:**

"(b) To promote the formulation and/or refinement of policy on access to and protection of victims of conflict; United Nations system responsibilities for internally displaced persons; the humanitarian interface with peacekeeping operations; security for humanitarian staff and supplies in conflict situations; the linkage between humanitarian action and the early commencement of post-conflict reintegration, reconstruction and rehabilitation activities; principles of engagement, suspension and disengagement for humanitarian agencies in the field; and other humanitarian issues that fall between gaps in existing mandates of agencies;"

***Add* subparagraph 20.4 (b) *bis* as follows:**

"(b) *bis*. To encourage increased joint programming and prioritizing of humanitarian action among agencies at the field level, thus enhancing the consolidated appeals process;"

***Replace* paragraph 20.8 with the following:**

"20.8 The Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation, in particular its Plan of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction held at Yokohama, Japan, from 23 to 27 May 1994, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/22 A of 2 December 1994, calls for reducing the vulnerability of populations at risk from natural disasters and similar

emergencies through the integration of disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation into development planning at the local, regional and national levels. While the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, proclaimed by the Assembly in its resolution 44/236 of 22 December 1989, is coming to an end in 1999, the need for a continuation in the future of a concerted and coordinated international effort to prevent, mitigate and rehabilitate the damage caused by natural disasters has been recognized by the Assembly in its resolutions 51/185 of 16 December 1996 and 52/200 of 18 December 1997. In this respect decisions are to be taken by the Assembly on the division of responsibilities within the United Nations system on that coordination. Responsibilities for operational activities for natural disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness shall be undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme in accordance with Assembly resolution 52/12 B of 19 December 1997."

Replace **paragraph 20.9 with the following:**

"20.9 Subject to the outcome of the end of the Decade review to be carried out by the General Assembly, the objectives of the subprogramme in the interim, through 31 December 1999, which would be pursued within a coordinated and concerted inter-agency approach, would be to promote:"

Replace **subparagraph 20.9 (b) with the following:**

"(b) Policy commitment and necessary technical support for disaster reduction practices, including through the appropriate application of science and technology at the country and regional levels;"

Replace **subparagraph 20.9 (d) with the following:**

"(d) Community involvement in the planning and implementation of disaster reduction measures."